



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 22-2152A, Version: 1

Subject:

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Azeen Sarkhosh v. Hunter's Glen Condominium Association, Inc. et al; HUD Case No. 04-22-2195-8; PC Case No. 22-050 - alleged housing discrimination.

Recommended Action:

Approval and authorization for the County Attorney to initiate litigation on behalf of Azeen Sarkhosh through outside counsel retained for these legal services.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Summary:

On July 25, 2022, Complainant Azeen Sarkhosh filed a housing discrimination charge with the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR) alleging Complainant was subjected to unlawful housing discrimination on the bases of disability, discriminatory refusal to sell, and failure to make reasonable accommodation under the Fair Housing Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §3601, et seq.). Specifically, Respondent's failure to respond timely to Complainant's emotional support animal (ESA) application, which she needed to close on her property sale contract with Respondent. This lack of response prompted Complainant to cancel the sales contract on closing day, thus minimizing damages if her ESA application was denied after closing. After investigation, on October 24, 2022, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Complainant was a victim of housing discrimination based on disability through Respondent's failure to make a reasonable accommodation and refusal to sell, in violation of Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code and the Fair Housing Act, as amended. Attempts to conciliate the matter were unsuccessful.

In accordance with Sections 70-146 and 70-147 of the Pinellas County Code, the County Attorney's Office is required to file a civil action on behalf of an aggrieved party seeking appropriate relief, and if a timely election is not made, to have the charge decided in a civil action.

Background Information:

The Determination issued by the PCOHR setting forth the facts and applicable law that led to the reasonable cause determination is attached, as well as the Final Investigative Report.

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jewel White, County Attorney
Keiah L. Townsend, Assistant County Attorney

Partners:

Office of Human Rights.

Attachments:

Determination dated October 24, 2022.

Final Investigative Report dated October 25, 2022.